

Claims 1-23 are present in the above-captioned application and have been subjected to a species election under 35 U.S.C. § 121. Specifically, the Official Action avers that the following patentably distinct species of the claimed invention are present in the claims:

Species I, characterized by Figures 1-3 and 11-13;

Species II, characterized by Figures 1-3 and 4-7; and

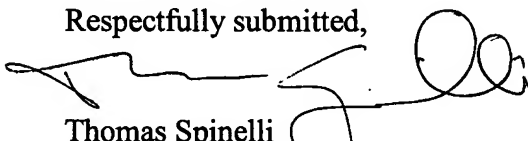
Species III, characterized by Figures 1-3 and 8-10.

It is the Examiner's position that the species listed as Species I, II, and III are patentably distinct from each other.

In response to the Examiner's requirement for species election, Applicants elect to prosecute the subject matter of Species I, which is readable upon claims 1-7, 9, 10, 12-15 and 17-20. However, Applicants reserve the right under 35 U.S.C. § 121 to file one or more divisional applications directed to the non-elected subject matter in this application.

In view of the foregoing, an examination on the merits of the elected claims, at an early date, is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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